614 probably done for a variety of reasons: partly because the original clan split up into several totem groups; partly because these organs of the animal body are most often regarded as containing the soul; partly for the practical reason of not wishing to forego the enjoyment of eating the meat of the entire animal. For a clan of herdsmen, it would have been impossible to select only cattle as their totem like, for instance, the hyena or the chameleon since the clan would have had to go hungry because of the taboo imposed by its totem.

614 784 262 For the clan member his clan totem, his umusiru, is an object of awe. It either inspires veneration as a member of an earlier generation of his kin group or it causes revulsion for other reasons. It is taboo to him, either because he regards it as sacrosanct due to its superior characteristics or because he regards it as impure due to its disagreeable characteristics. In their effect on the attitude of the clan member, these two emotions are the same. The umusiru is carefully avoided. Any injury or, what is worse, killing of a totem animal, any contact with or occupation connected with the totem or a part of the totem is considered an offense of which it is difficult to purge oneself. Eating its meat or drinking its blood or milk is prohibited. Out of this strict food taboo, there developed the now predominant attitude that meat, blood, milk, and other parts of an animal are impure and injurious to the health of the clan member. The impurity can only be eliminated by
● [789] means of elaborate ceremonies, and the umufumu (medicine man) determines the amount of the penance which depends on the seriousness of the case. Moreover, violations of the totem taboo, particularly of the food taboo, are automatically and magically punished by illness or even death for the offender (cf. No. 49, pp. 152, 153).

Since the members of other clans eat the meat of the totem animal of one clan, they are regarded as impure by this clan. Thus, the food taboos erect barriers between clans with different totems. For example, [104] if members of the clan of the Bawanda (Babanda), whose totem is the duikerbok, find

765 Funeral rites are performed only when a king is buried, but after each death certain mourning customs are observed which are more or less elaborate depending on the social position of the deceased. If the deceased is a common Murundi and also father of a family, his widow (or widows) and children observe a mourning period of seven days by not leaving the homestead. Presumably they are afraid of the spirit of the deceased when going outside the house so shortly after his death. Inside the hut they introduce numerous inovations and rearrangements as though they wanted to lead astray and divert the spirit of the deceased should he decide to return. The entrance to the residential hut is changed to another side, new stones are found for the fireplace, the place of the bed is moved, all the tools are rearranged, and so forth. After the seventh day every
● [783] member of the family takes a thorough bath in a stream, probably as a symbolic cleansing from the defilement caused by the deceased. Then the whole family have their heads shaved as a symbol of purification and mourning, and during the following two months they always wear clothes of mourning when leaving
[292] the house, i.e., barkcloth which is neither dyed black, the normal color, nor painted with patterns (No. 19, p. 163) but
[822] has its natural reddish-brown color; thus red is the color of mourning here. The name of the deceased is not mentioned any
[551] more so as not to cause his malevolent spirit to appear, and all other persons or objects bearing the same name are given new ones.

766 Naturally a deceased mutwale is given more respect than a common Murundi. For the former the kiranga performs the
211 ceremonies of the "holy spear" (see p. 134), and a tree is
768 planted on his grave [115] as a memorial (imana) which is inviolable. The family of the deceased leaves the homestead and settles in another place; the huts of the deceased disintegrate and disappear, and the fig trees that form the fence gradually grow into magnificent trees. Nobody may cut them down for
[689] wood on pain of death (No. 19, p. 205). The sites where chiefs once lived, both in Urundi and Ruanda, can be picked out anywhere in the landscape by these groups of trees arranged in a circle where they once enclosed the courtyards (Plate 29a).

224 inkezi, and monkeys (1), whose flesh they eat. This makes them

[825]

1. Only the chimpanzee (impndu) and the gorilla (ingagi) escape the cooking pot because, as the Pygmies say with a shade of malice, "they were formerly our peers (ngo n'abatwa bachu) and only with time have they degenerated and turned into animals (ngo zahinduts' inyamaswa)!"

●[783]

most "impure" in the eyes of the others. They handle bows and wooden
[411] arrows with great skill. Although they are always on the watch for game, they cannot derive all their subsistance from it. The plants and wild roots of the forest are not sufficient either. In former times,
[571] they used to hold for ransom those travelers who had the temerity to cross their domain, and they raided the Bahutu fields. Now that
463 European authorities have put an end to these acts of pillage, they have found new sources of revenues in the making of ropes, baskets, and bows, which they sell in the villages or take to market. One may no longer say of the Negrillos of Ruanda that they are still at the "gathering stage." They have been beyond it for an indeterminate period of time.

563 The great Batutsi chiefs like to have a few Batwa around them
696 and use them chiefly as litter bearers. Many of them live at the capital where they are used in various capacities as guards and watchmen. Executioners are recruited among them. They like to exercise this function, for they keep the victims' remains.

It must be added that they showed unequaled cruelty in the exercise of this horrible function. The screams of the victims aroused no pity in them. European penetration has fortunately put an end to this dismal vocation.

224 The Negrillos live in very primitive huts made of branches,
[342] /36/ which do not provide complete protection against the inclemency of the seasons or wild animals. The latter do not usually arouse much fear in them, since they are familiar with their habits and lairs.

1[i.e., the eating of various meats by the Batwa. -Aug/st]

754 11. In order to wreak vengeance on an unfaithful wife who
684 has left the conjugal home, the husband fetches a plant known by the
837 name of uruburamadjo /406/ the etymological meaning of which (kubura kujya) is "to have no place to go," that is to say, to have no place to stay. This indicates the use to which the angered husband puts the plant, and the results he expects from it. He braids it into a sort of pad upon which he must place butter or pour castor oil that belonged to the unfaithful woman. The mystic pad is hidden under a rock. It must be removed a month later and placed under another rock. This method, add the credulous natives, infallibly creates difficulties between the fugitive woman and her temporary husbands. She will be dismissed as many times as her first spouse shifts the magic pad.

●783 B. Purifiers or exorcisers of all sorts and exhumers or mutilators
791 of corpses. In order to ward off evil spells and the deadly consequences that might derive from certain events such as the violation of a taboo, the burning of a hut, a murder, the coming across a corpse or a killed animal, or to avert the fury of a spirit on the rampage, the king, his court, and his subjects call upon the services of people called by the name of Abashumburuzi, Abahanyi b'amachumu, Ababuzi, etc. Like their other colleagues in the occult, mysterious, and magical sciences, these practitioners enjoy official and legal recognition.

1. The Abashumburuzi, sorcerers who are resorted to by taboo violators.

Abashumburuzi is the title given by the people of the Lukiga (that is, the mountain people) to a group of purifiers whose function is often the same as that of the mugangahuzi, or "protectors against lightning," with whom they are often wrongly identified.

755 The mushumburuzi, if one holds to the etymological meaning
783 of his trade, is believed to have the power of expelling spirits from the body of a sick person (1). To do this, /407/ he performs veritable exorcisms, makes magic passes over the body of the patient, calls the spirits by name, and begs them to let go of their victim. He holds in the hand a bunch of shrub branches endowed with magic properties and moves them over the body of the sick person.

The spirit that caused the illness takes refuge in the symbolic broom. Then all the magician has to do is to take the spirit-chasing

755 tool and leave it at some crossroads....Woe to those, however, who
783 should fail to notice in time the itinerant abode of the evil spirit, ever in search of a new victim. According to popular belief, these sorcerers also have the power of averting the misfortune or punishment that follows the violation, no matter how involuntary, of any taboo, departure from custom, scorn of tradition, or even the appearance of any extraordinary object or event.

845 The birth of a freak child, the excessive growth of a fruit or plant, etc., may be prejudicial to the man who fathered or owns it.

787 Every unwonted event is a revelation to the Blacks. To them
783 nothing is fortuitous, and whatever deviates from the ordinary, no matter how little, is a manifestation of hidden powers. After meeting with such evil portents, the Munyarwanda experiences the need for purification as he would after the violation of a taboo, to avoid the misfortune that would befall him. It is in this sense that they identify unfavorable omens with departure from ancestral custom.

784 Numerous are the prescription and customs whose strictly material infraction involves fearsome consequences, such as a particular disease or even death. Among the interdictions and prohibitions, some apply to everyone, others to one clan or another, to women alone, or merely to the king. Persons who are in mourning or in other special /408/ circumstances must observe numerous taboos and must abstain from a large number of actions. The interdiction frequently bears on an object or animal which must not be touched or eaten, and which must not be looked at.

There are also taboos about days, that is to say, the prohibition to engage in certain occupations on certain days.

843 There are many taboos to which a woman is susceptible during
783 her pregnancy. The sight of a canoe may cause her to give birth to a child whose lips are pointed like the prow of the boat.

If she meets with a killed animal, a dog, a wild boar, an otter, she may give birth to a dead child or one covered with sores like those which she saw on the corpse. The sight of a man who is being put to death or merely bound makes her liable to the same misfortune, and so does the burning of a hut. The sight of a weapon which has been used to kill entails the same consequences.

783 843 It is easy to see from these cases how frequently people must resort to purification (1).

1. In certain cases, taboo violators need not resort to specialists and may purify themselves by a simple method.

If a pregnant woman has come upon a death weapon, a bound prisoner, a killed snake, or anything else that is taboo, she must immediately procure some of those herbs or leaves with magic properties which are in common usage. She will bring them into contact with the corpse or bond, and then crush them to drink their juice or inhale their aroma. If there are no plants available, she first touches the thing involved in the taboo and then brings her hand to her forehead, where she traces a kind of sign of the cross. This is what Fr. A. Bros called "procedures of imitative magic." Religion des Peuples non civilisés /Religion of Uncivilized Peoples/, p. 72).

783 The rites of purification vary in accordance with the case, the individuals involved, and the sorcerer himself. Almost invariably, however, the latter pours into the person's hand a few drops of a liquid (issubjo) in which he has mixed the juice of certain plants with magic characteristics which have the property of curing all evils. /409/

824

1. The Blacks set great store by plants with magic properties. It would be easy to make up a long list of them. A whole separate study could be made about them, in view of the number and importance of popular beliefs concerning the vegetable world. "From the most humble herbs to the largest trees," says Fr. Sébillot, "/plants/ play a role which for many years has drawn the interest of scholars." (Le Folklore /Folklore/.)

783

2. "Spear purifiers" (abahanyi b' amachumu) and their exorcisms.

The word umuhanyi, plural abahanyi, comes from the verb guhana, which means literally "to punish, to reprimand." It is only in a figurative sense that it means "to purify." The word guhanula is used to describe the performance of the purifying rites. /416/

The spear purifier exercises his functions at the time of a murder or assassination.

He is called upon by the victim's relatives to give satisfaction to the dead person and the members of his family by aiding them to obtain justice for the spilt blood with his mysterious procedures. He purifies the spear or death weapon with the aim of preventing or arresting the fatal consequences which the murder would not fail to involve for the dead person's relatives. The latter, fearing that they will undergo the same fate as their dead kinsman, call upon the sorcerer. He often works simultaneously with the "conjurer of spirits" (umushyitsi, umuhamagazi), who also has a role to play at this time, and sometimes both functions are filled by the same man. Among other rites, for we do not intend to describe them all (they would be more pertinent to a study dealing exclusively with funeral ceremonies), we shall cite only those pertaining to the role and function of the "spear purifier."

783 The weapon must be both "punished" and "purified" at the same time.

If the weapon involved is a spear that was successfully retrieved, the sorcerer first unhafts it. The spearhead is set aside, its tip (umuhunda) broken to pieces, and a few wooden scrapings are removed from the shaft (uruti). This debris is placed in a small gourd of the type called idegede (1). If the actual weapon is not available, the

> 1. Henceforth, the family may not eat this kind of gourd. (La Mentalité primitive /Primitive Mentality/, op. cit., p. 293.)

purifier works with a similar weapon, but a used one. Then the gourd is filled with beer. Owing to its mystic usage and to the scrapings that were placed in it, this gourd bears the name of akabatongera in sorcerers' terms. The relatives who are present take a mouthful of this pombe. The gourd with the scrapings and spearhead is then entrusted to someone who is an outsider (umuse) to the clan or to the family, and who goes /417/ and hides it in an isolated spot, such as a thicket, a cave, or a hole of some sort. The same is done with any other weapon that may have been used to commit the crime, arrow, sword, or knife.

783 ..."A practice of this kind," says Levy-Bruhl," is almost universal among African tribes.

171 "Those ceremonies are carried out because it is thought that the weapon bears calamity or fatality with it. This is the case among the Akamba. According to them, a weapon once used to commit a murder will continue to be the instrument of new deaths. No ceremony, charm, or magic of any sort, however, could ever exhaust this deadly property. The weapon will continue to kill indefinitely through its master's hand, no matter what he may do. Since there is no way of removing this curse, the Mkamba uses guile. He places the weapon on a path or at some spot where a passer-by is likely to see it. Once the latter has picked it up, the deadly influence of the weapon falls upon him and the first owner is freed from it...." (1)

783

1. A Munyarwanda would never pick up such accursed weapons, whose origin and function he knows only too well. The curse which is attached to them and the fear which they inspire cause him to go his way without a covetous glance.

In certain clans the purifier-sorcerer slips the scrapings into a sweet potato which he feeds to a goat. The latter is then sold to strangers faraway on whom falls the curse attached to the weapon which was used to commit the murder. The price of the animal, which was formerly paid in kind (hoes, peas, beans, sorghum, etc.) was renounced or thrown away. The victim's family considered that they were thus freeing themselves completely from the evil spell which befell them through the violent death of one of its members.

769 783 628 In order to pacify the spirit of the deceased, a young man of the kin group is chosen during the funeral ceremonies to avenge him. He must obtain a new /418/ spear which the purifier-sorcerer or his colleague, the "conjurer of spirits," takes from his hands in order to cut in two a plant with a mysterious property called irago or umurago. "I have 'cut up' the tribe of murderers," he says, "may they all die of it." Then, addressing himself to the deceased, "Here is the spear that will avenge you. Grant it the opportunity and the power to carry out the vendetta."

[766] According to customs peculiar to each clan, the body is exposed on a deserted hill, hidden far out in the bush in rocky crags, or buried near the village or even in the courtyard.

In the latter case, some irago, or if there is none some murago that grows in the swamps, is planted along with its roots. At the end of about a year, the sorcerer comes back to cut this plant /again/, as he did once before. Then a goat is sacrificed.

The purifier takes some of the blood of this offering and sprinkles it on the grave, saying, "Let this blood cause the entire family of the assassin to perish."

[Live, of a murdered person. - Analyst]

783 The murderer in turn worries about the consequences of his act. He appeals, therefore, to the same kind of operators in order to avert the vengeance and the curse which he was wrought upon himself and his kinsmen.

The rival of the previously mentioned sorcerer takes a reed which he cleaves throughout its length without altogether separating the tips. He draws apart the two rods, which are stuck into the ground. The culprit and members of his family pass under this novel type of bridge. The operator seizes the reed, puts its two parts back together, and tosses it at a distance, saying, "I have warded off the spirit (of the deceased) that was pursuing you." Then, leading his client to a crossroads, he sprinkles him with a few drops of a liquid he has prepared and which contains the juices of certain plants.

Standing back to back with his protégé, the sorcerer /419/ slips into his hands some amulets which he must wear around his neck. "Just as we cannot see each other," adds the protector against sorcery, "may the spirit of the man thou hast killed never see thee (find thee)." Then he tells the man to lie flat on the ground. Taking a sort of broom (urutsiro) made of plants with magic properties, he brushes it over the body of the individual. "Ndagushumburuye, I have caused the spirit of the man who pursued thee to depart," he adds.

The operation has every chance of success if the murderer manages to obtain through gifts the services of the sorcerer who "worked" for the victim and his relatives.

3. "Exhumers and mutilators of corpses" (ababûzi), from the 789 word kwabura, "to exhume a corpse."

781 They are resorted to in two cases; /first, / when it concerns a criminal who has been executed, and his spirit must be prevented from harming the living, that is to say, those who killed him. We shall speak of this later in the course of this work.

The second case is the following: The murderer, a man of common extraction, whether he killed willingly or unwillingly, wishes to be protected in turn against the wrath of his victim's spirit. To this end, he calls upon one of the exhumers of corpses who helps him obtain the body of the slain man (this is not always easy). Then the corpse must be mutilated in order to drive the spirit out of it.

766 In principle, the corpse may not be buried. Whenever possi-
821 ble, it must be taken to a mountain, a hill, or some other elevated spot, to meet the king of the sky who chose to honor him (Yamukujije) by calling upon him. In the Gissaka province, the body is left on an old termite nest.

Rejoicing is the rule for the duration of the ceremonies. The
[152] close relatives must join in this novel festival with /437/ dances and joyful cries in spite of their grief. If the deceased was a man, it is said that the king of the sky made him his chosen subject. If a woman
588 or young girl was involved, she was chosen as his wife. This belief
766 had become so ingrained that if the unfortunate woman recovered
821 she could not be taken in marriage by anyone but the king. In the more distant provinces, she was regarded as having actually become the wife of lightning. She was then treated as a widow or divorcée, that is to say, her "second marriage" (guchura) was carried out as simply as possible, without any of the ceremonies that go with the wedding (kulongora) of a young girl.

Before leaving, the purifier-sorcerer stuck a ficus branch into
766 the ground at the spot of the accident, along with a bough of red-
821 blooming erythrina (umwuko), a reed, and a stalk each of ishoza,
[824 umurembe, ifubge, ilalire, urubamba, etc., to purify the spot and
783] avert any future consequences.

2. The role of the purifier-sorcerer when domestic animals
821 have been struck down by lightning. The corpses of the animals,
231 cows, goats, sheep, are left on the spot. No one may touch them
791 before the sorcerer arrives. If the accident occurred in the evening
796 and his services could not be requisitioned in time, watchmen spend the night near the victims to guard them from hyenas and prowlers.

On the following morning at daybreak, people gather at the scene of the accident and beat drums as a sign of rejoicing. As in the preceding case, the sorcerer twice offers a liquid substance of his own making to each of the bystanders, and makes them inhale another.

Husbands must secure a few drops and bring them to the wives who remained at home. /438/ The bodies of the victims are also copiously sprinkled with it.

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231
821 The purifier-sorcerer need not be present at this last ceremony. Their role and presence were essential only on the day of purification. They always come away with handsome rewards, leaving on the spot protective herbs or lucky amulets (impigi za Biheko).

753 3. In some localities individuals also resort to these doctors in mystical sciences upon the death of a leper or the burning of a hut.

783 a. The natives have an acute aversion to contagious diseases and especially to leprosy. Once the unfortunate victim of one of those terrible diseases is dead, the purifier-sorcerer is called in to carry out various ceremonies. He tosses lustral water upon the hut of the deceased, and finally sets fire to it. The onlookers run far away in order to avoid the smoke, as though it could transmit the disease of the deceased owner.

In the central province of Nduga, the sorcerer has a small hut built in which he places the son of the deceased. With one hand he sets fire to the hut, while with the other he rapidly snatches the child out of it.

The leprosy is supposed to have vanished forever, and henceforth no other member of the family will become its victim. The sorcerer vouches for this. /440/

b. In order to avoid the evils which might befall the owner of a hut that has burned or even his neighbors, the same sorcerer is resorted to. He makes his clients drink the liquid mentioned previously.

The site of the hut is sprinkled with lustral water, and the bystanders are also sprinkled with it.

Three reeds stuck into the ground and covered with banana leaves make an improvised hut in which the owner and his wife must stay for an instant (baryamana). The evil spell has been lifted. Henceforth, nothing is to be feared (bamaz' umuriro or bamaze ishyano, that is to say, "they have warded off all misfortune"). The diseases which might have afflicted those present at the accident and their unborn children have been averted forever.

791 In the Bugoyi, to the northeast of Lake Kivu, the role of protector against fire and its deadly consequences is the prerogative of a special category of sorcerers known by the title of Abahozi or

644 805 of praise nor boasts about his deeds and the number of enemies he has slain. During kichurasi they content themselves with simple clapping (kukoma mukono). People do not wear their better clothing or ornaments. Even the bulls are removed from the herds. [783] All life that has its beginning during this period is regarded as unclean and is killed.

The period of mourning ends with the kichurasi full moon. [533] They begin to beat the drums, very softly and very little on the first day, somewhat more on the second, until on the third day the regular beating is resumed. On the eleventh day the chiefs bring the king presents, get drunk on beer, and sacrifice sterile cows.

The end of the month of kichurasi is celebrated with a great feast for which the ntore gather at court. The feast is called kukura kichurasi. [297] I could not determine whether this feast has any connection with the myth about the redeemer (mutabazi).

This is the time of the great ceremonies of the babandwa and of sacrifices (kuterekera).

805 The lunar month is divided up according to the phases of the moon. Thus they speak of: imboneko, "emerging moon"; kwezi, "waxing moon"; inzoro, "full moon"; mizima, "waning moon"; imfunda, "disappearing moon." These designations, however, do not correspond to the weeks. The weeks have five to six days and are determined by the relationship of free days to compulsory work days.

[298]

Chapter 15

Religion and Related Matters

771 Ancestor Worship. The religious views of the Banyaruanda do not fit into a compact, harmonious system. This is probably due not only to the low level of development of their religion, but also to the dissimilarity of the Batutsi and Bahutu cultures which have influenced each other.

769 171 Ancestor worship is the basis of religious beliefs in Ruanda as well as in the rest of the interlacustrine region.

7: Roscoe M-5 (1919-1920) 1924
FO42 Rundi FO42

After the mourning the heir was purified by an elder of the clan, and he then took the mourning garment and buried it in some secret place. The mourners shaved their heads and hid the hair. A medicine-man decided whether the house of the dead man might still be inhabited or not. If the people were permitted to remain there, they, the place, and the pots had to be purified; but if they had to go they gave the pots and furniture away and left the house to fall down.

The heir was purified again by an elder of the clan and then went to buy a cow, which he took to the king, whom he was not on this occasion allowed to see. The next day he visited the king, taking a present of a young bull, and informed him of the death. This reception constituted his acknowledgment by the king as the dead man's heir, but if he proved unsatisfactory he might later be dismissed from the chieftainship.

The heir took all his father's widows except old women and his own mother. He even took widows with children, and the children regarded him as their father.

When a married man lost his father he lived apart from his wife for two months, and on the death of his mother he avoided his wife for one month.

9: Maquet E-5 (1949-1951) 1961 FO42 Rundi FO42

It should also be pointed out that the supply of the staple foods was usually short at the end of the dry season and that starvation periods, in which many people died, were occurring several times in a life-time. For instance in a thirty-year period (1900–30) among the events used as references to assess the age of people, three famines are remembered: in 1908, 1918, and 1924.

The above considerations take into account only the total production of available food in the country. But it is obvious that in a society composed of several groups very unequal in power, access to food was not the same for everybody. It seems that we may safely infer that the normal diet of many Hutu was barely adequate to sustain people who had to spend a considerable amount of physical effort in agricultural tasks.

In the preparation of meals, two facts relevant to health should be mentioned. Firstly, the methods of cooking very often resulted in a diminution of the nutritive value of food. For instance, beans cooked in water lose from one-sixth to one-fifth of their carbohydrates.[27] Secondly, the standards of cleanliness in food preparation were very high among the Tutsi, though more for magical than for hygienic reasons. This applies particularly to milk. To avoid flies and dust, receptacles containing milk were always closed with basketwork conic covers adorned with elongated geometric patterns. It is believed that if milk comes into contact with anything impure, the cow would be harmed. The contaminating substances were not always connected with the Western idea of dirtiness. For instance water was considered dangerous to milk. Consequently the wooden vessels in which milk was kept were not washed out with water but with cows' urine.

The equatorial situation of Ruanda, combined with the rather cold climate due to its elevation, resulted in the spreading of diseases characteristic of tropical as well as of temperate regions. Yaws, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, recurring fevers, and a large variety of intestinal diseases are quite common in Ruanda today.[28] They are not new diseases resulting from new conditions introduced by the European occupation, such as malaria, which was unknown in Ruanda except in the narrow strip adjacent to the Ruzizi River until roads were built permitting a very rapid transportation of people, or some venereal diseases which spread

[27] Ministère des Colonies, 1951b, p. 49-51.
[28] Cf. Lestrade, 1955; Vincent, 1953, pp. 16-18.